

Job Search Strategies

While recent unemployment rates and economic news have raised anxiety levels, many employers are still hiring. Assumptions and fears about an uncertain job market should not be one's primary motivation for avoiding the job market or attending graduate school. These uncertainties and fluctuations make it especially important for job seekers to conduct an effective job search and to be *actively engaged in the process*. Recommended steps for a successful job search are outlined below.

Job Search Steps

Start Now!

While you have competing demands on your schedule, a job search requires dedicated time and energy. A successful job search takes significant time, up to nine months in a healthy economy. If you are serious about finding a job, you must schedule time in your calendar to focus on it. Realize that finding a job is your responsibility, while simultaneously recognizing that there are external factors beyond your control. It is never too early to begin the job search.

Use Multiple Strategies

There is not one magic strategy to job searching. Rather, it is a combination of multiple strategies. It is important to strike a balance between looking for advertised openings and unadvertised openings (the hidden job market). Experts agree that between 70-80% of positions are never publicly posted and are identified through networking. A complete job search is not solely surfing the Internet. Sending out resumes and cover letters is one strategy in conducting a job search, but using several different methods at once will likely get you the most results. Using your networking skills in conjunction with sending out resumes and making phone calls is a very powerful way to diversify your job search. Try talking people you know who recently completed a job search to find out what worked well for them.

Have a Plan

When developing your job search plan, consider the following questions: What job do I want? Where do I want to live? What types of organizations are best for me? What's my specific search strategy? Answering these questions will help guide your personal job search towards meaningful, professional experiences that match your skills, interests and values. Develop a plan of how much time you will commit to your job search. Create a list of contacts and notes to track your progress and information. Meet with a staff member in the Career Center to develop your personal job search plan.

Prepare Your Job Search Materials

You need a good resume. You must be ready to respond immediately as you become aware of jobs for which you want to be considered. A good resume requires time and effort, so be sure to allow yourself time for multiple revisions. Use resources on resume writing and cover letters at the Career Center and have your documents reviewed. Call 503.943.7201 for more information and to schedule an appointment.

Strengthen Your Candidacy and Make Connections

What are you doing now to build your resume? Are you interning, volunteering or actively involved in the community or on-campus? The majority of employers are looking for candidates with applied experience. Many employers, especially in a tight economy, also recruit interns as potential full-time hires. Positioning yourself within organizations of interest can enhance your chances of getting the job you are seeking.

Network

Most people find a job by connecting with people. Networking resources include professors, family, friends, neighbors, professional associations, current and previous employers (or internship supervisors) and alumni. Tell everyone that you are looking for a job and ask for suggestions or contacts; however, do not simply ask them for a job. The Career Center can assist you in using LinkedIn to identify UP graduates working in particular fields, locations, or for specific employers and seeking their advice. Many alumni want to help so take advantage of this resource. As you

continue your job search, you need to spend at least 70% of your time talking to people and maintaining contact. Connecting with contacts should not be a one-time occurrence; networking is an ongoing process that should continue even after you have obtained a position.

Use Events, Resources & Services at the University of Portland

Many employers connect with UP candidates through the Career Center. It is important to make the most of what is available right here at the University. The Career Center collaborates with other departments and sponsors several programs and events where students and alumni have an opportunity to network. Bring a resume and dress appropriately to make a good first impression. Visit www1.up.edu/career for topics and a calendar of events. The Career Center also offers resume and cover letter review, mock interviews, career guidance and an online job database, Handshake, <https://up.joinhandshake.com/>. For more information on the services and resources in the Career Center, call 503.943.7201.

Consider Short-Term Service Opportunities or Temporary Positions

It's possible to acquire applied experience through positions that are temporary, educational, or service-oriented. Short-term experiences can serve as a way to gain relevant knowledge, increase self-confidence, earn money, and perhaps lead to something more permanent. A good way to secure "bridge" or "interim work" is by "temping" through a temporary employment agency. Search online for lists of local employment agencies.

Depending on one's personal situation, the period immediately following graduation or in between jobs could be a "window of opportunity." Creatively exploring this "window" can have a profound effect on one's future. It can be an exciting time to experiment with careers of interest or perhaps experience another culture; what is gained can be life changing and move you closer to clarifying long-range career goals. Consider public service programs such as VISTA, Peace Corps, HealthCorps or Teach for America. The Moreau Center (www1.up.edu/moreaucenter/) at the University of Portland can assist you in identifying service opportunities.

Keep at it!

A job search rarely produces immediate results. It takes time and effort. Some leads will take you to dead ends, and, unfortunately, a normal part of job hunting is receiving rejections. Try not to be discouraged by them and use them as a learning tool. Follow up with phone calls to the employers to get feedback as to why you were not offered the job. Remember, it is important to be courteous during these inquiries. Be sure to track your progress and keep in touch.

Position Yourself for the Future

While you may have to accept a position that isn't your dream job, keep in mind that many kinds of experiences can be career stepping-stones. Make choices that will lead to future options. Learning new skills, volunteering in a field that professionally interests you while working "just for money," thoughtfully investigating graduate school, and effectively networking are positive steps to take for the long term.

Additional Resources

For more information about the job search, the following resources are available in the Career Center:

- *How to Get Any Job with Any Major*. By Donald Asher
- *The Foolproof Job-Search Workbook*. By Donald Asher
- *Getting from College to Career*. By Lindsey Pollak
- *Never Eat Alone*. By Keith Ferrazzi
- *What Color is Your Parachute?* By Richard N. Bolles
- *Networking For Everyone*. By L. Michelle Tullier

These websites are very helpful as well:

- www.myperfectresume.com/how-to/career-resources/netintv/
- www.livecareer.com/quintessential/networking-guide
- <https://up.joinhandshake.com/>